BGSA General Body Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 11, 2016
12:30 – 1:30
Cartwright Hall 216

Present
Ashley Johnson, Executive Chair
Porsha Frazier, Vice Executive Chair
Jennifer Cooks, Communication Chair
Shakita Van Liew, Advocacy Chair
Sandra Bempah, Program Chair

Absent
Dr. Kate McAnulty, Advisor

BGSA Executive Board Positions
The group informed two interested members, Amaka Offodile and Sandra Bempah of recent openings on BGSA’s Executive Board for the Finance Chair and Program Chair positions respectively. Position descriptions were provided and discussed with the members. Following formal votes from the Board, Amaka Offodile was appointed to serve as the Finance Chair, and Sandra Bempah was appointed to serve as the Program Chair for the organization.

Spring 2016 Meeting Schedule
The group discussed dates for the executive and general body meetings for the semester. It was determined that the Board would meet prior to the start of the general body meetings, rather than hold separate meetings on different days, as this was most fitting with each member’s schedule. The schedule of general body meetings are presented below:

- Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. Cartwright Hall, Room 216
- Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. Cartwright Hall, Room 216

Service Opportunities
Ashley Johnson discussed with the group two upcoming service projects that would be beneficial for the organization to participate in:
• Several organizations affiliated with the university are preparing to collect water donations to support and provide clean water to the residents of Flint, Michigan. Ashley informed the group that former BGSA Executive Chair, Jennifer Bryant is planning to participate in this effort and would like the group to aid and collect water bottles for this cause. The group expressed enthusiasm for this service opportunity and discussed potential university connections or outlets to assist with collecting bottled water donations. The group also discussed the option of planning a trip to help transport donations to Flint.

• BGSA recently participated during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Day event by providing assistance to Campus Kitchen Project, an on-campus organization designed to prepare and deliver meals to local community members in need. The group agreed that this service project would be a good option to consider participating in again in the future. Ashley also informed the group of an opportunity provided through the Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement (OEECE) Super Service Saturday’s program to assist a mobile food pantry in delivering food to locations in Akron, Ohio. This event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 27, 2016, from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

General Updates
The following are general updates regarding planning for fundraisers, social and networking opportunities, and upcoming campus events:

• The group briefly discussed the planning of social events for the semester. The group decided to continue planning and discussion of social events during the next Executive Board meeting.

• The group explained to Amaka and Sandra its desire to collaborate with other organizations on campus. Ashley explained that she is in the process of communicating with staff affiliated with the Ronald McNair Scholars Program with the hope that members of BGSA may be able to serve as informal mentors to students in this program. The Women’s Social Club, Black United Students (BUS), and the Kent African Student Association were also identified as organizations the group would like to collaborate with and support in the future.

• Ashley also discussed with the group the idea of developing a small scholarship which would be awarded to graduate students to help supplement academic costs (i.e., textbooks, supplies, etc.). The group agreed that this would be a great way to give back and help students in need and discussed potential requirements or qualifications to establish regarding the scholarship (GPA, attendance of general body meetings, description of need, etc.).

• Ashley informed the group that the annual Graduate Professional and Academic Development (GPAD) Workshops will be held for graduate students during the week of February 22-26 and that registration for this event is currently open. The workshops provide information about several topics such as networking, grant funding, research
ethics, tools for technology, interviewing, etc. All who may be interested were encouraged to attend this event.

- A Graduate Student Social will be held on Wednesday, February 17th in the Cartwright Hall Atrium from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. This social is informal and held to allow graduate students from different departments to mingle and socialize with one another. Ashley strongly encouraged members to attend this event.
- Ashley informed the group that the Africa and the Global Atlantic World Conference is currently accepting submissions from students. The theme of this conference is “Cultures, Identities, and Racial Violence in the Pan African World.” The conference will be held on April 8, 2016.
- Porsha Frazier informed the group that the group will not continue to purchase the shirts for the organization with the company that has created shirts for the group in the past, and will thus be seeking a new company to create shirts for members who have previously paid membership dues. The group decided that t-shirts will no longer be associated with group membership. Amaka inquired about the membership requirements for students who wish to join the group and the process for paying dues. The group determined that for future reference, it may be ideal to have membership length consist of the academic year and that members be requested to renew their payment of dues at the start of each academic year.
- Shakita Van Liew informed the group that receipts for the ACME Cash Back fundraising opportunity were submitted the week prior and that the organization can expect to receive a check in the mail within the next several weeks. She explained to the new members that the program is simple, requiring that people only need to collect and submit receipts from ACME that allow for cashback and that the organization will receive a percentage (5%) of the profits. She announced that BGSA was able to collect a total of $1,095.63 in receipts and will receive $54.78 in return. The group intends to participate in the next ACME Cash Back program starting in August.
- Shakita reminded the group that the university’s Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement (OEECE) is sponsoring the Alternative Spring Break program will consist of a trip for students to one out of several metropolitan areas where volunteers will provide direct service to areas of need. Transportation and board will be provided through a one-time registration fee; this activity will occur from March 19-25, 2016. The deadline to register for this volunteer opportunity has been extended to February 12th.
- Shakita provided the group information regarding several scholarships which are available for students in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services. The deadline to apply for any scholarships is February 15th.
- Lastly, Ashley reminded the group that the 31st Annual Graduate Research Symposium will be held at the university on April 22, 2016. All forms of scholarship (posters, papers, dissertations, etc.) are eligible for submission. The deadline for registration is March 1, 2016.
Closing Remarks
The next General Body meeting will be held on Thursday, March 10, 2016 in 216 Cartwright Hall at 1:00 p.m.